

NORTH COUNTY REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY
COMMISSIONERS MEETING
November 26, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Larry Longley, Greg Oakes, Jeff Sinker, Bob Magee, and Jan Iverson. Interim Fire Chief Scott Johnston, and Board Secretary Sheri Lynn Stevens. Dave Fennell was not present. This meeting was recorded.

Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Longley at 16:07 hours.

FLAG SALUTE

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Comments from the public will be taken at this time. Commissioner Longley opened the floor for public comments. There were none.

OATH OF OFFICE

Commissioner Janet Iverson recited the oath of office before the assembled Board and meeting attendants. A press release will be released to the local news agencies.

(Correction: Commissioner Iverson swore for Position 2 not 3 as recited. This correction was noted by the SnoCo Elections representative upon filing the Oath.)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Longley requested the oath of office be moved to the first item of business. Commissioner Oakes seconded the motion. All agreed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Magee motioned for approval of the consent agenda with Commissioner Oakes seconding it. Motion carried by consensus.

OLD BUSINESS:

Fire Chief Search: Commissioner Oakes updated the status of the Contract of the Fire Chief and noted that it was signed and he would start on December 9, 2014. His comments reiterated the excitement on the Board's part that a quality individual was selected for this leadership role.

Aid Car Proposed Remount: There was a representation by Interim Fire Chief Johnston regarding the quotes for remounting two (2) existing aid car boxes on new Braun chassis. One of the quotes was \$400 less than the other has to do with subsequent repair required and (shore power system?) on the other box. The lesser amount is for the non-damaged box. After total refurbishment, paint and installation on new chassis, with tax, the cost is \$207,506.60. This is a savings of roughly \$42,000.

Chief Johnston noted that one of the units to be serviced is currently out of service and Commissioner Oakes asked about its problems. There was a subsequent discussion regarding the known and repetitive issues with this model, which is the determining factor for moving away from the 6L diesels to a Braun chassis at this time.

Commissioner Oakes asked if there was an Equipment Replacement Plan at this agency and Chief Johnston noted that he had the feeling there was funds set aside for replacement of vehicles but not spent and those funds are now being utilized. He also asked about the mileage on these vehicles and was answered around 110,000 miles. Fire Fighter Cory Westerman reiterated that all the 6L diesels have had engine problems, oil and coolant leaks, etc.

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Commissioner Magee asked if we had asked around to other departments. Commissioner Oakes concurred that these machines have issues. There are some actions agencies are taking to help mitigate the issues; delete the EGR, "bullet-proof" it, put better head bolt in and it's a mess if you have to do it. Estimated \$12,000 to have it done per unit.

There was a discussion about the need for a reserve unit while out of service and Chief Johnston discussed the replacement schedule noting that we have two units in reserve so there will always be a backup when the work is being done on these two units.

Commissioner Iverson asked how long a rebuild takes and Chief Johnston noted that about 60 days after the unit gets to the Chehalis site and the pre-build meetings are complete.

Commissioner Oakes noted that Sno#7 just received a remounted unit and it is working very well. Most agencies are moving away from the diesel and going back to gasoline units. There was discussion on the availability of diesel motors on that chassis and the benefits of going back to gas.

Commissioner Longley noted that Dave Fennell had emailed some concerns about the 2008. Commissioner Oakes acknowledged the email and his question of why is NCRFA writing off the vehicle for \$500 (chassis trade-in value) in lieu of us having to dispose of it. He also asked about the current standard in the County is being met and does this manufacturer meet longevity needs. There was some conversation about the NorthStar which is an International-Terrastar chassis but the box is still by Braun. One of the reasons we are going back to Braun is because it would be consistent with the rest of our fleet as almost all our units are Braun boxes. Commissioner Magee asked if these boxes would fit on the newest vehicle just purchased (bariatric unit) and it will not, said Chief Johnston. He also noted that this new International-Terrastar until is larger and we are getting news in-state and out of state, that there are problems with transmission issues. This news was another factor in going back to Braun and again there was a significant cost difference.

Commissioner Oakes made a motion to move forward with the execution of the contracts for the Braun remounts, in consecutive order, seconded by Commissioner Magee. Motion passed with no comment. The Fire Authority Secretary confirmed which budget year 2015 the expense will be paid. Chief Johnston confirmed these are reserve funds held for this purpose and will be spent in 2015.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2015 BUDGET: (meeting to be convened separately)

Proposed Budget: Commissioner Longley opened the floor for any public comment on the proposed budget for 2015, and the Resolutions on Levy for Fire and EMS. No comment from the public was offered.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Oath of Office – Commissioner Iverson Moved to first order of business.
- Resolution 112614-01 2015 Levy Fire: Commissioner Longley asked for any discussion. There was none. Commission Oakes motioned to adopt, Commissioner Magee seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, the motion was carried.
- Resolution 112614-02 2015 Levy EMS: There was none. Commission Magee motioned to adopt, Commissioner Oakes seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, the motion was carried.

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- 2015 Levy Certification: Fire Authority Secretary noted this was included in the packet but not needed to be moved.
- 2015 Meeting Schedule (Draft Review): Commissioner Longley brought up comments from Dave Fennell regarding the times presented. Commissioner Oakes read his concerns as follows:
 - a) Current proposed time of 16:00 hours: Is this the best time for a public meeting? I would propose 09:00 meeting for several reasons. First fire support staff would be at work and this time would not require any additional hours for staff two days a month. The other reason is that is typical easier for hold-overs or getting coverage for work.

Commissioner Longley suggested that as the decision was not time-critical, the Board can wait until Commissioner Fennell was present to discuss the times of the meetings. Commissioner Oakes noted that he had no objections but his comments were that the Board in the past has seemed flexible regarding member's works schedules and Commissioner Longley concurred that is why 16:00 was the current time.

Commissioner Oakes noted that he makes some good points and with the meetings being proposed to be moved to the Stanwood Fire Station as that is where the staff will be, there may be some cost savings as well.

Commissioner Magee noted that his only point on having the meeting in the morning would be public access. Most of the people will be at work in the morning, but a 7 o'clock in the evening meeting they are not. Commissioner Longley suggested that they should give some thought to one morning meeting and one evening meeting as there were two meeting a month. Commissioners agreed that this would be worth consideration. Commissioner Longley tabled the issue until the next meeting.

- December 24th Meeting: The Fire Authority Secretary noted that there should be some discussion regarding the December 24th meeting and if the Board wished to meet that day or change the meeting date. This topic was tabled until the next meeting.
- Website Vendor: Commissioner Longley noted he had received correspondence from them concerned, and Chief Johnston noted he had also called him and talked to the Secretary as well. Chief Johnston said he had called and has seen something in the Daily Dispatch, that was printed about the website not being up-to-date which was mentioned in conjunction with our Chief candidate search. There was something said in a public meeting, that the website was poorly done or outdated. This is what made it into the paper by which got back to him.

Chief Johnston, who spoke to the vendor, noted to the vendor that he had heard that when asked to make changes there was a lack of response. This vendor also does several other local fire service websites that we use all the time and they look updated, functional. His response to this was that NCRFA staff would ask for items but not produce the content for uploading. Chief Johnston let the vendor know he was familiar with his other work and it seemed that there was some type of disconnect and would be passing along his concerns to the new Fire Chief and the Board.

The Secretary offered some insight as to the vendor's type of website hosting requiring a great deal of hard-coding and that it was not accessible to NCRFA and that all content needed to be sent to him. There was a proposed presented to the old Fire Chief by this vendor to update the website but for some unknown reason, there was no implementation of

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the new proposed changes. There was also some specific discussion by the Secretary with the vendor on requested changes for including meeting minutes as well as agenda, plus the changes in the commissioner page and adding the Chief's page back to the site which seemed to be considered part of our standing maintenance agreement and would incur no additional cost.

The Secretary noted that while she had no specifics or opinions on this topic, it was very clear that the vendor did not feel his business was properly represented in the media and that NCRFA has not afforded him the opportunity to provide us with the best service available. Commissioner Longley asked if the Board felt that we should give him some content and see what happens. Commissioner Oakes asked what the vendor expected from us to facilitate him doing the work.

There was discussion regarding the need to move beyond the current conversation and move forward with this vendor, by gathering some updated information for the webpage and offering for him to meet with the Fire Chief once he arrives. There was also some conversation about needing a single point of contact from our department that interfaces with the vendor and then we can begin measuring the length of time for interaction.

Commissioner Iverson asked how this vendor was paid whether by retainer or maintenance and it was confirmed by maintenance agreement and annual hosting fee. Commissioner Longley was quite convinced that when Chief Cermak arrives he needed to address a single point of contact for this matter.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- BC/Chiefs Report: October's report was presented. Budget and Levy Certification being worked out. Temp office help in the office on Tuesday and Thursday. Some hours are being done after hours but time is being adjusted as flex-time. Review of the temp/professional services contractors and the work being accomplished.
- EMS Levy Consultant: Chief Johnston reported he had talked to our legal council about the need to go to bid on our chosen consultant for EMS Levy. Assistant Chief Eastman will be meeting with them to discuss District #1 work and wanted to know if the Board wishes to have him set up an appointment for NCRFA in order to get on their schedule, to not lose our place. This was confirmed to have AC Eastman put us on her schedule for forthcoming appointment.

Commissioner Oakes had questions regarding the Chief's Report. Chief Johnston noted that some of the items were repeated as the report was not updated in all the sections from the last report presented for September.

Commissioner Oakes asked Chief Johnston about how the promotional exams went and Chief Johnston responded that it did not go well and everyone who tested did not pass. Commissioner Sinker commented that he did not believe the test was appropriate. Commissioner Oakes asked what the current plan is, and Chief Johnston noted that there is contractual language that tells the agency what is to be done if there is no active promotional list and this is being followed, which is what our Operations is currently doing presently as the promotional list is down to only one person. At this time, we are using previous active members who have been on the list before and there is language that also says seniority can be used for determining the Acting positions.

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Commissioner Oakes clarified that this was through National Testing Network (NTN) and the cost was \$7,500. Chief Johnston confirmed that the test was paid for and the Assessment Center was also paid for but no one passed the written so the Assessment Center is being held, in case we determine to retest again.

Commissioner Oakes asked if this test had NCRFA specific questions or was it a hands-off test. Chief Johnston confirmed it was a hands-off test with all the questions coming from the IFSA Fire Officer, 4th Edition, exam with 100 multiple choice questions and ergometrics fire team test which a video portion with 40 questions based on the testing supervision level of Captain or Battalion Chief.

Commissioner Magee asked if the candidates have asked to review the test with Chief Johnston, and he confirmed this has been the case. The test itself allows for weighting the assessment or scoring methods. It was announced that a passing score would be 70%. The tests were weight at 40/60 and averaged, to gain a successful outcome. Afterward Chief Johnston noted that he has contacted other departments and Fire Chiefs to ask what is their method and has received a response that this is how they do their promotions with the same exact test. And if they person is successful, then they get put on the list but if not, then they go the contractual language based on seniority that can fill the bill for the shift.

Commissioner Oakes suggested the Board re-evaluate the use of this company to administer the test when the expense does not match the results. Chief Johnston noted that this vendor was the lowest bid out of four bidders and regardless we are still paying an expense with similar results. Commissioner Longley noted that with the new Fire Chief coming in two weeks to make a decision on this. Commissioner Magee commented that it may be of benefit that the test answers be reviewed in order to see where the staff did not succeed. Chief Johnston noted that all testing was reviewed with the staff by appointment and this test allows for a review of the areas of where they were strong and where they needed work as feedback. A determining factor in why this test was chosen from this vendor. Other vendors do not allow for this type of feedback.

Chief Johnston noted that in his experience with suggesting for training, the theme is always on tactics when these tests allow for feedback to address supervisory skills, management skills, personnel interaction, and personal relations type stuff. Where the test has given input on where to spend training dollars beyond tactics.

As a group, the testers did better on the video and the fire team promote test than they did on the company officer exam. Commissioner Magee asked if this was because there was not enough time to study for the exam and Chief Johnston responded that they had 63 days, which Magee acknowledged but asked again if that was enough time to study that amount of material. If this is determined, then maybe 90 days and it was acknowledged that if that is desired it can be done. Per the contract the amount of time given was no less than 60 days to study and they had 63 days and some participants did not take full advantage of the total study time and picked them up with only 30 days before the test. Commissioner Magee noted that while our staff is meeting all other standards within the personnel throughout the county there must be some component that is missing as our staff is not making through this exam.

Commissioner Oakes reiterated his concern that with the money spent there is no list of A and B candidates, though conceded that the value may be the educational value of the testers understanding the exam's difficulty but from a purely dollar to outcome value. Much like a levy, if it doesn't pass then you know what to do for next time for moving forward. There was a

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question regarding the movement to the Assessment Center if the written was not passed and it was confirmed this was the way the test was set up, with a 70% passing to proceed to the next level of testing.

The Secretary asked how often the testing occurred. The answer is an average of every two years once the promotional list happens. In this case there will be re-evaluation of the test and direction of the department wants to go.

Commissioner Magee asked about the feedback on the scoring and Chief Johnston noted that they do the scoring and he had discussed the matter extensively. He also noted that this test was nice as each candidate was given a spreadsheet with all the areas that they were tested in and the dimensional results. The office test is based on the IFSTA test is strictly an officer specific test. The dimensional test included about 10 different sections with the results communicating the range of your score; high-average-low. Commissioner Oakes asked if this is where we are able to define the department specific weighting. Chief Johnston said that the test is written by a group but is not specific to the department. This vendor writes tests for all types of government agencies including fire, police and military, FBI, CIA, etc.

Commissioner Oakes confirmed that NTN could do the retesting and can be done per 10 candidates for \$00 with various options. All information will go to the new Fire Chief and he is aware of the results and the situation.

Commissioner Iverson asked about the current level of injury and physical issues. Chief Johnston noted there had been a few back strains related to lifting but no severe injury other than the hand injury during a Tuesday drill.

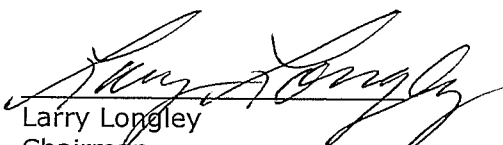
CORRESPONDENCE

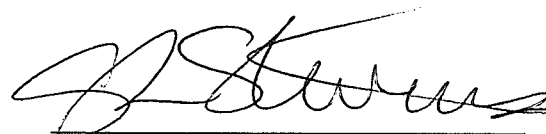
Letter from Marysville reviewed as seen. Commissioner Oakes moved to approve the request for transport billing fees; seconded by Commissioner Magee. There was no discussion and motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commenced for 30 minutes regarding performance public employee with no anticipated outcome. Meeting began at 17:00 and was extended with three more 30 minute sessions. There was no action taken

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 19:17 hours.

BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S MEETING: (Board Members: Chairman and one Board Member, Secretary, Chief, and one Firefighter elected by their membership):


Larry Longley
Chairman


Sheri Lynn Stevens
Acting Board Secretary